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cc: PS/Mr Stewart (L&B) - B
PS/Dr Mawhinney (L&B) - B
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
① PS/Sir K Bloomfield ✓ 19/10 - B
Mr Miles - B
Mr Chesterton - B
Mr Kirk - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr J McConnell - B
② Mr. Spence ✓ 19/10

PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B

LETTERS TO THE UNIONIST PARTY LEADERS
LETTERS INVITING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARTICLE 11 REVIEW

The Secretary of State yesterday said on television that he would be sending out letters of invitation to contribute to the Article 11 Review today. I attach draft letters to each of the four main political parties in Northern Ireland. I have assumed that the Secretary of State does not wish to write to the Workers Party. The Secretary of State will have Mr Bell's submission of 14 October, proposing letters also to Westminster party leaders, to coincide with an answer to an Arranged Parliamentary Question later this week. Depending on what the Secretary of State decides on this, some amendment may be needed to the attached drafts.

2. The letter to John Hume (SDLP) and John Alderdice (Alliance) is fairly straightforward, and I believe self-explanatory. The Alliance have, of course, already asked for the opportunity to put their views to us.

3. The letters to Molyneux and Paisley are intended also to reflect the Secretary of State's discussion at the beginning of last week. The letter to Molyneux therefore takes Molyneux's letter of 3 October as a starting point, and develops the theme of talks without preconditions, before turning in its final paragraphs to a formal invitation to contribute to the Review. The Paisley letter is identical to the Molyneux letter, except that it includes no direct references back to Molyneux's letter of 3 October.

4. Finally, I enclose a second draft letter to Molyneux, about the suggested discussions on security; and a letter to

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Maginnis on the same topic. These letters follow the line agreed by the Secretary of State at his meeting last week.

(Signed)

I M BURNS

17 October 1988
KR/5842

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DRAFT LETTER TO RT HON JAMES MOLYNEAUX MP

I was grateful for your letter of 3 October in which you helpfully refer back to the ideas you set out at our meeting last January. In view of what you say in your final paragraph, and particularly in view of the misrepresentations being reported in the press, thought I should set out the present position as I see it.

I remember that at the time, I described the outline proposal you gave me in January as constructive and I have repeated that view on a number of occasions, for example in the Direct Rule Renewal debate. But you stressed to me that you wished your outline to be treated on a strictly confidential basis, that the 3 pages you gave me were only an outline of your ideas, and that they represented only a starting-point for negotiations with the other constitutional parties: you were clear also that you would only expect to develop your ideas more fully once negotiations had started.

I have sought to respect the status of your paper, and the basis on which you gave it to me. I continue to believe that it is a constructive starting-point and we had a fairly thorough discussion about it on 11 May. The next step then seemed to me to find a basis for a dialogue between the Northern Ireland parties, but you will remember that it was you and Ian Paisley

who took the view at our 26 May meeting that further discussion was not at that stage possible for you. Again I respected the point you were making, and I recognised the obstacle for you created by the talks then going on between the SDLP and Sinn Fein.

I am frankly surprised that you should now apparently take the view (and it has been reported in the press) that I have not responded to the ideas you put forward in January. That view ignores the basis on which that 3 page outline was given to me; ignores the discussion on 11 May; and ignores the fact that further discussion was prevented because of a fresh obstacle identified by you in May, an obstacle which has only recently disappeared.

I am encouraged however by the implication in your letter of 3 October that you would now like to see the kind of progress that seemed possible earlier in the year. I would also like to see us make that progress, and I continue to stand by the approach I took in discussion with you and Ian Paisley earlier in the year - I make no preconditions as to the ideas which might be put forward, and I do not believe that, with goodwill on both sides, there need be any insurmountable obstacle to moving eventually to inter party talks. I suggest that we should meet again shortly to clarify the basis on which your outline proposal might be further considered.

Since this correspondence began, we have drawn gradually nearer to the date of the Review to be held under Article 11 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Although I know the difficulties posed for you by anything that would appear inconsistent with your opposition to the Agreement, I hope you will not overlook the simple fact that a Review is by definition an opportunity for change. The fact that the Review is nearly upon us seems to me to lend fresh value to my suggestion of talks without preconditions. It also makes it the more desirable that you should respond positively to the invitation I have now given to contribute to the review.

This letter is, therefore, also a formal invitation to you to let the Government have the benefit of the views of your party on this most important subject.

You may find it helpful, therefore, if I repeat briefly what I said last Tuesday. The review starts in November and will cover the whole working of the Intergovernmental Conference and its associated Secretariat to see whether any changes in the scope and nature of its activities are desirable in the light of our experience since it was set up.

The review of the working of the Conference and the Secretariat is no narrow exercise, and to help us with our own work on the Review, the Government wants to be able to take into account the full spectrum of views which are held in the Province. We want to hear from the elected representatives of all sections of the

community, including your own; just as we also want to hear from others who have views to put forward. I know that there have been complaints about a lack of consultation in the past, but I am now seeking to offer the opportunity to contribute.

I believe that these two proposals (for talks without preconditions, and the opportunity to offer views on the workings of the Conference) offer a real chance for your party and the other Northern Ireland parties to put forward views on the widest possible range of political and constitutional matters. I look forward to hearing from you.

I am writing in similar terms to Ian Paisley, and am writing in similar terms about the review to the leaders of the other constitutional Northern Ireland parties, as well as to the other party leaders at Westminster.

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DRAFT LETTER TO REV IAN PAISLEY MP

Since I wrote to you on 19 September, Jim Molyneaux has written referring back to the ideas you and he set out at our meeting last January. In view of the misrepresentations being reported in the press, thought I should set out the present position as I see it.

I remember that at the time, I described the outline proposal you both gave me in January as constructive and I have repeated that view on a number of occasions, for example in the Direct Rule Renewal debate. But you stressed to me that you wished your outline to be treated on a strictly confidential basis, that the 3 pages you gave me were only an outline of your ideas, and that they represented only a starting-point for negotiations with the other constitutional parties: you were clear also that you would only expect to develop your ideas more fully once negotiations had started.

I have sought to respect the status of your paper, and the basis on which you gave it to me. I continue to believe that it is a constructive starting-point and we had a fairly thorough discussion about it on 11 May. The next step then seemed to me to find a basis for a dialogue between the Northern Ireland parties, but you will remember that it was you and Jim Molyneaux

who took the view at our 26 May meeting that further discussion was not at that stage possible for you. Again I respect the point you were making, and I recognised the obstacle for you created by the talks then going on between the SDLP and Sinn Fein.

I am frankly surprised that it should now be reported in the press that unionist spokesmen consider that I have not responded to the ideas you put forward in January. Such claims ignore the basis on which that 3 page outline was given to me; ignore the discussion on 11 May; and ignore the fact that further discussion was prevented because of a fresh obstacle identified by you in May, an obstacle which has only recently disappeared.

I would still like to see the kind of progress that seemed possible earlier in the year; I continue to stand by the approach I took in discussion with you and Jim Molyneaux earlier in the year - I make no preconditions as to the ideas which might be put forward, and I do not believe that, with goodwill on both sides, there need be an insurmountable obstacle to moving eventually to inter party talks. I suggest that we should meet again shortly to clarify the basis on which your outline proposal might be further considered.

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Since this correspondence began, we have drawn gradually nearer to the date of the Review to be held under Article 11 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Although I know the difficulties posed for you by anything that would appear inconsistent with your opposition to the Agreement, I hope you will not overlook the simple fact that a Review is by definition an opportunity for change. The fact that the Review is nearly upon us seems to me to lend fresh value to my suggestion of talks without preconditions. It also makes it the more desirable that you should respond positively to the invitation I have now given to contribute to the Review.

This letter is, therefore, also a formal invitation to you to let the Government have the benefit of the views of your party on this most important subject.

You may find it helpful, therefore, if I repeat briefly what I said last Tuesday. The review starts in November and will cover the whole working of the Intergovernmental Conference and its associated Secretariat to see whether any changes in the scope and nature of its activities are desirable in the light of our experience since it was set up.

The Review of the working of the Conference and the Secretariat is no narrow exercise, and to help us with our own work on the Review, the Government wants to be able to take into account the full spectrum of views which are held in the Province. We want to hear from the elected representatives of all sections of the

community, including your own; just as we also want to hear from others who have views to put forward. I know that there have been complaints about a lack of consultation in the past, but I am now seeking to offer the opportunity to contribute.

I believe that these two proposals (for talks without preconditions, and the opportunity to offer views on the workings of the Conference) offer a real chance for your party and the Northern Ireland parties to put forward views on the widest possible range of political and constitutional matters. I look forward to hearing from you.

I am writing in similar terms to Jim Molyneux, and am writing in similar terms about the Review to the leaders of the other constitutional Northern Ireland parties, as well as to the other party leaders at Westminster.

You may find it helpful to know that the Review will cover the whole working of the Executive, the Secretary of State and his officials, the Secretary of State's staff, the staff of the Executive and the staff of the Secretary of State's staff.

The Review of the working of the Executive and the Secretary of State is no partisan exercise. It is a review of the way in which the Executive and the Secretary of State work. The Review, the Government will be able to hear from you on the full spectrum of views about the way in which the Executive and the Secretary of State work. I look forward to hearing from you on the way in which the Executive and the Secretary of State work.

DRAFT LETTER TO RT HON JAMES MOLYNEAUX MP

I am writing to you separately about political matters in reply to your letter of 3 October.

On security matters, you are, as I understand your letters, suggesting that I should meet Ken Maginnis as your security spokesman, rather than a party delegation. I am willing to be guided by you in this, and I have therefore written to Ken today; I enclose a copy of the letter I have sent him.

The alternative, if a delegation is thought undesirable (and I see the strength of that point), would be for me to meet you alone, in which case I would be able to brief you on our current review on Privy Counsellor terms.

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DRAFT LETTER TO K MAGINNIS MP

As you know, the Government has been examining the scope for further improving the effective implementation of our security policy.

Our review has of course taken account of the views you put to the Prime Minister in August but I understand from Jim Molyneux that you are preparing a follow-up submission. Since I am anxious that we should take full account of the views of the constitutional political parties as we continue with our review, I have suggested to Jim Molyneux a discussion to review security matters and he in turn has suggested that a discussion with you, as the unionist spokesman on security, would be more appropriate, and more secure than a meeting with a delegation.

I am therefore writing to you now to say that it would be helpful to me to hear your views, as unionist spokesman, at first hand; and I am asking my office to get in touch with you to offer a convenient date and time for us to meet.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Jim Molyneux.

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ARTICLE 11 REVIEW - LETTER TO SDLP

You will recall that, in a speech on 11 October, I invited the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland, and others as well, to let me have their views on the forthcoming Review under Article 11 of the Anglo Irish Agreement. This letter is, therefore, by way of a formal invitation to you to let the Government have the benefit of the views of your party on this most important subject.

You may find it helpful, therefore, if I repeat briefly what I said last Tuesday. The review, starting in November, will cover the whole working of the Intergovernmental Conference and its associated Secretariat to see whether any changes in the scope and nature of its activities are desirable in the light of our experience since it was set up.

No one can deny the importance of the Agreement for Northern Ireland. The review of the working of the Conference and the Secretariat is no narrow exercise. Hence, to help us with our own work on the Review, the Government wants to be able to take into account the full spectrum of views held in the Province. We want to hear from the elected representatives of all sections of the community, including your own; just as we also want to hear from others who have views to put forward. I believe that there is now a real opportunity for your party - and the other Northern Ireland parties - to put forward views on the widest possible range of

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SECRETARY OF STATE - LETTER TO MR. [Name]

political and constitutional matters. I look forward, therefore, to hearing from you as soon as possible, and in any case before the end of the year. You should send your submission to me personally at the Northern Ireland Office, either in London or Belfast.

I am writing in similar terms to the leaders of the other constitutional Northern Ireland parties, as well as to the other party leaders at Westminster.

The way that it related, therefore, if I repeat to you that I am writing this today. The review, starting in November, will be a thorough working of the Intergovernmental Conference by the Secretary of State to see whether any changes in the way that the activities are desirable in the light of the progress that has been set up.

No one can deny the importance of the Agreement for Northern Ireland. The review of the working of the Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat is no narrow exercise. Hence, in order to get the best work on the Review, the Government wants to be able to have the account the full spectrum of views held in the community, and not just from the elected representatives of all sections of the community, including your party, but also from all those who are active in the community, including your party, and the other political parties.

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ARTICLE 11 REVIEW - LETTER TO ALLIANCE

You will recall that, in a speech on 11 October, I invited the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland, and others as well, to let me have their views on the forthcoming Review under Article 11 of the Anglo Irish Agreement. This letter is, therefore, by way of a formal invitation to you to let the Government have the benefit of the views of your party on this most important subject, as you yourself proposed in your letter to me of 15 September.

You may find it helpful, therefore, if I repeat briefly what I said last Tuesday. The review, starting in November, will cover the whole working of the Intergovernmental Conference and its associated Secretariat to see whether any changes in the scope and nature of its activities are desirable in the light of our experience since it was set up.

No one can deny the importance of the Agreement for Northern Ireland. The review of the working of the Conference and the Secretariat is no narrow exercise. Hence, to help us with our own work on the Review, the Government wants to be able to take into account the full spectrum of views held in the Province. We want to hear from the elected representatives of all sections of the community, including your own; just as we also want to hear from others who have views to put forward. I know that there have been

complaints about a lack of consultation in the past, but those who have complained now have the opportunity to contribute to the process of the Review. I hope that opportunity will be put to constructive use. For I believe that there is now a real opportunity for your party - and the other Northern Ireland parties - to put forward views on the widest possible range of political and constitutional matters. I would prefer to have your comments in writing in the first instance, but I would of course be happy to meet you and your colleagues (as you suggested in your September letter) after that.

I am writing in similar terms to the leaders of the other constitutional Northern Ireland parties, as well as to the other party leaders at Westminster.

No one can deny the importance of the Agreement for Northern Ireland. The review of the working of the Constitution and the Secretariat is no narrow exercise. In fact, in order to carry out the work on the Review, the Government wish to be able to call on the views of the full spectrum of views held in the Province. We will be inviting the elected representatives of all political parties to contribute, including your own. It is our hope that you will be able to contribute your views to the process.

FD/9832